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# THE SON OF ROYAL LANGBRITH.

BY WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS.

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## PART IV.

### XVIII.

MRS. LANGBRITH came out every fine day to look over her flowers at first, and then to work over them. She made the man clean up round the tall syringas planted at intervals along the brick walk to the gate, and about the lilacs that overhung the fence. She followed him as he combed down the limp last year's grass, and raked the dead leaves and stems into heaps at the points she chose, and then set fire to them. At tea, she liked to have the dining-room windows a little open, that the homely smell of their burning heaps might come in with the fresh evening air, and possess her with the dreams of that girlhood which now no longer seemed so far past. She thought Dr. Anther might stop some evening in going by; but if she caught sight of him in the distance, she went indoors. She realized that their embrace at their last meeting was more like a final parting than a pledge of union, unless she were ready to do what she wished, but was afraid, to do. Yet this thought of it had the greater sweetness for that reason; and the love that had come into her life so late was the more precious because it seemed to have come too late.

Toward her son, grown a man, she felt its indecorum in a kind which she could not quite formulate, but which was distinct enough. If her love had come when she was younger, and he still a child, it would have been different; and yet she could not blame her friend for not knowing himself sooner. That blame would have been as indecorous toward Anther as now the thought of him was toward her son. Before her marriage, her fancy had scarcely been stirred. She had gone the round of the simple children's amusements in her country neighborhood—the parties and picnics and school festivals; but no little boy had been her beau. She had not even been teased by her mates about any one. She was younger in experience than any girl she knew in the mill when Langbrith cast his eye her way, and suddenly, somehow, through her necessity and helplessness, made her his wife. She certainly was not aware of anything like love for him, so far as she imagined love; but she was flattered and

dazzled and overcome, and she supposed that she was marrying as other people married, and for the reasons that they had. Her awakening from her illusion was like the terror of a child which has not enough knowledge of the world to match its experiences with those of others. In a fashion not definite or articulate, she accepted her lot as a common lot in wifehood; and, as she had supposed herself to have married from the usual motives, so she now supposed that what she underwent was not unusual. From her sufferings, she formed a notion of marriage grotesquely false, which was like a child's misconception of life, and the spell of this kept her submissive. She did not talk of what she underwent; no one talked to her of such things, and apparently it was not the custom.

Her childlikeness so prolonged itself, not ignorantly, but innocently, through her wifehood and motherhood and widowhood, that, when at last she was aware of liking the man who later loved her, and of trusting him and longing for his affection, it was with a sense of shame as from unprecedented guilt. Before the thought of her son she was so ashamed that she knew she should never be able to tell him of Dr. Anther, nor ever allow Anther to speak for himself. She did not feel that her tenderness for her friend could be wrong when she was with him. She was now glad of that sole embrace which they had ever suffered their love, and proud of it; but the knowledge of it sunk her at her son's feet when she imagined his knowing it. Her face burned, and it did not avail her to remember the examples of mothers that had married again, and had lived on with their husbands, and their children by their dead husbands, in unimpaired harmony and mutual respect. She was moved late in her inextinguishable girlhood to her first passion, but only to find herself inexorably consecrated to her widowhood through her reverence for her son's ideal of his father.

At sight of Hope Hawberk tilting lightly down the sidewalk, she was seized with the same impulse to flight as at the approach of the doctor in his vagarious buggy; and she had to conquer far more shyness, when, one warm afternoon, Hope caught her so pre-occupied with the hired man that it was too late for her to think of eluding her. She shrank together beyond a well-budded lilac, where Hope's gay voice, as if it had a bright entangling noose of sound, reached her in the chanted salutation, "How do you do, Mrs. Langbrith!" and held her fast. She came reluctantly from her shelter, and advanced slowly toward the gate, on the top of which the girl had laid her arms, and her red cheek for a moment in the hollow of one of them. "Isn't it awfully warm?"

"Yes, it is. Though I haven't noticed it so much, working about. Won't you come in, Hope?"

"Why, I will, Mrs. Langbrith, if you'll let me. I was just coming in, when I saw you." She pushed the gate open and joined Mrs. Langbrith, who turned with her, and walked toward the house. "How fast your things are coming on! It seems as if they were

twice as forward as ours, and there are twice as many of them. I don't suppose they help each other, do they?"

"I don't believe they do," Mrs. Langbrith answered so literally that it might have passed as a piece of the same whimsicality. "How is your grandmother?"

"She's as energetic as ever. I don't see how she can be. This weather takes all the good resolutions out of me, Mrs. Langbrith, and I don't know how I've got together enough to come and see you. I want to tell you something that I don't want to tell you."

The girl's humor was catching, and the woman caught it. "Well, what is it?" she asked, but she apparently did not expect Hope to answer till she had got her seated at an open window of the parlor, with a palm-leaf fan in her hand.

"Why, it's just this, Mrs. Langbrith. I've got into a scrape with James, and if you can't tell me how to get out of it, I don't know who can."

Mrs. Langbrith's heart fluttered with a varied anticipation, but she united her emotions in the single inexpressive phrase, "I don't believe it's anything serious."

"Yes, it is, Mrs. Langbrith. It's very serious, and it has gone so far now that something has got to be done about it, and I can't have the responsibility left to me."

Mrs. Langbrith listened with the wish for one thing and the will for another, but her will prevailed over her wish, and she kept herself from saying anything leading. She believed that there was some sort of love-quarrel which Hope had come to own, but she was not going to tempt her to the confession. She said, non-committally, "I will try not to hold you responsible."

Hope laughed rather distractedly. "I guess you will have to. It's about that tablet he wants to put up in the front of the library."

Mrs. Langbrith stiffened in her chair, and said, "Oh!"

"Well, James has been writing to me about it since he went back to Cambridge, and I guess he thinks I have been making fun of him, when I was only making fun of the notion that he should take something I said so seriously. Don't you understand?"

"James is apt to take things seriously," his mother said.

"And I'm *not*," Hope retorted with a touch of resentment, as if she felt a touch of reproach in Mrs. Langbrith's tone, though the words themselves were so neutral. "And that's just the difference, and always will be." The last clause of the sentence was a generality, which the girl seemed to address to herself rather than Mrs. Langbrith. "Now, I'll tell you what it is. He asked me what I thought about his having the dedication on Decoration Day, and I told him I didn't think it was quite fair to take that day from the old soldiers and their families; and he saw it in the same light, and he telegraphed to say that I was right and he wouldn't. And I wrote back making fun of his telegraphing, as if it couldn't wait for a letter."

"I don't see any harm in that. James is very intense in his feelings, but he would see that you didn't mean anything unfriendly—anything—"

"No, of course not. But now comes what I am really ashamed of. My making fun seems to have made him very mad, so mad that he says he is going to give up the whole idea, and won't have anything done about it. He says I have made it seem ridiculous to him."

Mrs. Langbrith cast down her eyes. "James is very sensitive in regard to—Mr. Langbrith."

"Yes, I know that, and that's what makes me sorry. Of course, I didn't mean to hurt his feelings for his father. And now, Mrs. Langbrith, and now—I've got something else to tell you. You know how girls are?"

"Thoughtless, you mean?"

"No,—*bad!* Downright wicked! I told Susie Johns about James's telegraphing. I don't see why I should do such a thing. But we were laughing about a lot of things, and that came out. It was as mean as it could be. And now I would do anything in the world to make it right, but I don't suppose I ever can. I don't care a bit about his being mad at me for it; he has a perfect right to be; but what I hate is people laughing at him. I've been to tell Susie not to tell, since I got his last letter, but I know she will. He mustn't give up the idea, because they will say that I laughed at it, and that was the reason, and I am not going to have them. Don't you see? I expect *you* to blame me, Mrs. Langbrith, and never speak to me again; but I shall not care for that if you can think of some way to stop him—to make him not give it up. Why, he *must* go on with it now. Everybody knows that he was going to do it, and he must. Was there ever such a scrape?"

Mrs. Langbrith sat silent, but this was quite what Hope seemed to expect, and the face that she turned upon the girl was by no means severe. It expressed rather, an absence of feeling, somewhat distressed and puzzled.

Hope went on. "I don't believe it will do any good for me to write to him and tell him he must?" Mrs. Langbrith made no comment on this suggestion, and Hope owned, "Well, I *have* written to him, and he's written back, and said that he knows my real feeling now, and he cannot go on. I don't see why he minds my feeling, anyway, and that's the reason why I've come to you. I don't know what made me come to you about it, but I wanted to ask you if you thought it would do for me to ask Dr. Anther to write to James?"

"Dr. Anther?"

"Yes, and tell him not to mind a person who is not worth minding, but to go on and put up the tablet. Tell him that everybody approves of it, and expects it."

Mrs. Langbrith emerged from her absence, but the stare which she bent upon the girl was as silent as her far-off look.

"Will it do for me to ask the doctor? I don't want to do it,

because— But I will, rather than let it go as it is. I will do anything. What do you think, Mrs. Langbrith?"

Mrs. Langbrith shook her head, and said, with something that she kept from being a shudder, "Oh, no, it won't do to speak to Dr. Anther."

"For me? Or for any one?"

"For you. I—I will speak to him!"

"You? Oh, thank you, Mrs. Langbrith! I thought—I hoped—I didn't dare to hope—" The pent emotions, kept in so bravely, broke in tears, and Hope caught her handkerchief from her belt and sobbed into it. "Oh, dear, I don't see why you do it! I don't see how you can bear to look at me, or speak to me, much less do anything I ask you to, after the mischief I've made. But I do, *do* thank you—"

She wavered toward the other, with what design she did not know; but, whatever it was, Mrs. Langbrith put her arms round her, and pulled her head down on her shoulder, and the girl had her cry out there. "Oh, I'm so ashamed, I'm so ashamed!" she kept saying. "I don't know why you let me, Mrs. Langbrith!"

Mrs. Langbrith did not say, and perhaps could not; but when Hope's passion of weeping was spent, and she drew away to wipe her eyes, and compose her face, the woman said, irrelevantly, "How is your father, Hope?"

"Oh, much better. I believe the doctor thinks he can cure him?"

"That's good," Mrs. Langbrith said as irrelevantly as before, and now she let the girl, with a fling of her arms round her neck, run out of the house unhindered.

Half-way to the gate she met Mrs. Enderby coming up to make a call on Mrs. Langbrith; and, from behind the veil she had caught down over her face, she was able to chaunt a gay little "Good afternoon, Mrs. Enderby!" without exciting any question in the lady, except as to how a girl whose life was so tragically conditioned could keep that blithe note in her voice.

## XIX.

Almost the first thing Mrs. Enderby said was, "That poor, pretty creature, how wonderfully she keeps up!" for this was what was still first in her mind when she took the place at the window which Hope had just left, and looked to see if she could still see her.

Mrs. Langbrith said, "Won't you have a fan?" and Mrs. Enderby thanked her and took from her the fan which Hope had dropped on the table. "It is unseasonably warm."

"We often have a hot day like this toward the beginning of May."

"Oh, yes, that is true. But the leaves not being out makes it so melting in the sun. Is there the least hope for the child's father?"

"Dr. Anther has always believed his habit could be cured."

"Oh, yes, Dr. Anther: how we all depend upon him! Saxmills would be another place without him. We turn to him in so many things. I was just thinking about him—just speaking about him with Dr. Enderby. But, Mrs. Langbrith, what is this I hear about your son's giving up the notion of the tablet to his father? I hope it isn't true—just town gossip."

"James hasn't said anything to me about giving it up," Mrs. Langbrith answered, and she quelled the outward signs of her wonder whether Hope had come to her with a half confession, and had been twice as silly and light-tongued as she had owned. "He has given up having the dedication on Decoration Day."

"Oh, well, perhaps that's it, and it has got twisted into the other thing. May I say that you have heard nothing from him in regard to it?"

Mrs. Langbrith could truthfully assent to this, but she assented with so much coldness that Mrs. Enderby was struck by it, and a little hurt. In her kind heart, which was equal to most emergencies where excuses were needed for offences, she accounted for the coldness as the expression of rustic shyness. She had known village modesty to take the form of village pride, and, later, unmask itself in touching gratitude.

"We all," she went on, after thanking Mrs. Langbrith for her assent, "think it such an admirable idea, and Dr. Enderby particularly favors it. He feels it so important to recognize *character*, especially when it has influenced a whole community as Mr. Langbrith's has influenced Saxmills, and stamped his traits on the place, as Dr. Enderby says, that I believe he would have been glad to have a tablet to Mr. Langbrith's memory in the church."

At this point Mrs. Enderby certainly expected some sort of response; but Mrs. Langbrith preserved a silence of unbroken iciness. Perhaps she did not like the notion of a tablet in the church. Mrs. Enderby went on:

"But, of course, he feels that there is a peculiar fitness in its being in the library building. We all do, and I am sure every one will be glad to hear that there is nothing in that report, or nothing but a perversion of the Decoration Day part of it."

Mrs. Langbrith made no sign of gratification in Mrs. Enderby's conclusion, and Mrs. Enderby had to go away in an uncomfortable misgiving for the effect of the interest she had shown in the matter. She had no misgiving for the interest itself. That was simply a duty toward one of her husband's parishioners, such as she had promised herself to fulfil toward all after she had so reluctantly consented to his taking the parish of St. Cuthbert's at Saxmills. She felt that she was not only following him into the wilderness—anywhere over twenty miles from Boston was the wilderness for a Bostonian of her elect origin—but she had fears of the peculiar difficulties which a priest of Dr. Enderby's socialistic—she called

them "sociological"—tendencies would have in a cure of proletariat souls, housed in a temple built with money from their exploitation. Langbrith had given St. Cuthbert's small but sufficient church to the parish, as well as the library to the town; and Mrs. Enderby's question was, whether her husband could keep that perfect conscience between a due sense of gratitude toward the giver's memory, and his duty toward the employees of his son's milling property, in the event of those differences which might any time arise between capital and labor. She had been awakened by this question one memorable night, and had not been able to wait till morning before submitting it to Dr. Enderby, in a conscience inherited from Calvinistic forefathers through a Unitarian father who had preserved nothing from his ancestral faith but the conscience transmitted to his family of daughters. Dr. Enderby's own conscience was of the same lineage, and it cost them both a night's sleep to decide the point. In fact, it was not until late into the next afternoon that they had reasoned to the conclusion that to do right was his sole duty, and that to shrink from conditions which might sometimes render the right embarrassing or difficult would be a confession of unworthiness for the office they both wished to magnify.

Mrs. Enderby came away from Boston with all the reluctance that she had foreseen, but with none of the regret; and, though she was followed by the sympathies of her friends, she had as yet experienced nothing which turned her mind toward them in longing for their pity. Saxmills had not proved quite the social desert, beset with dangers, which she had sometimes foreboded. She had there, as everywhere, her husband, first and foremost; and, besides, there were several people she liked. Not counting those she loved because they were poor and sick and dependent, there were, among those she liked, Judge Garley and his wife, who were agreeable mid-Massachusetts town-folk, reasonably cultivated and passably acquainted with life, by reason of several winters' official residence in Boston; and she liked Mrs. Langbrith, ordinarily, very much, though she was not quite what Mrs. Enderby would have quite called cultivated, and certainly not acquainted with life. But her shy charm was a great charm for Mrs. Enderby, and it was much in her favor that she always made Mrs. Enderby think of that old-fashioned, late-summer flower, mourning-bride. The abiding girlishness of the long-widowed, middle-ageing woman responded to a girlishness of her own, from which she was fond of all the nice young girls of the village, like Hope Hawberk and Susie Johns and Jessamy Colebridge, and such others as did not dismay her by their fearlessness with the young men. Outside of the mills, the young men were, indeed, so few that there was, perhaps, not much reason to be afraid of them. But, above all, she liked and respected and honored Dr. Anther, whose life had such a daily beauty that she could better have expressed her sense of it if she were still a Unitarian, than she could now she was a churchwoman. She was



constantly finding him in the houses of affliction, which she visited in her own quality of good angel, and it was without surprise or any feeling of coincidence that she now met him coming to the gate of a common patient, which she opened next after closing Mrs. Langbrith's.

She merely said, "Oh, how delightful, Dr. Anther! I was just thinking of you." And then she added, "I hope you leave our poor sufferer better?"

"You will, after you have seen her," the doctor said, shifting his little bag of medicines from his right to his left hand, so as to take the hand Mrs. Enderby put out to him. He had a fine perception of her lady-world in Mrs. Enderby, and liked to say as nice things as he could to her. "She needs cheering up, and you'll be better for her than my medicine."

"If I could believe you were serious in your civilities, I should be conceited; but I know you only say such things to cheer *me* up—not that I need it just now. I've been to see Mrs. Langbrith, and she has reassured me in regard to a strange report I had heard. I wonder if you had."

"Better try me," Anther said, twitching his bag up and down with a latent impatience.

"Why, merely that her son had given up the notion of the memorial tablet for the library front. Had you?"

"No," Anther replied shortly, jerking his bag with open violence.

"Well, if you do, there's nothing in it, as far as his mother has heard. He *has* changed his mind about having the dedication on Decoration Day, and the report probably arose from that." The doctor said nothing, and once more Mrs. Enderby was bruised and disappointed by the bluntness of village manners—this time from one who had always been so responsive. But she rose above it, as she would have said, so far as to excuse him in consoling herself. "But I see your mind is on your next patient, doctor. It's cruel of me to keep you, and I won't any longer. Good-by!"

She went in to cheer up the sick woman, but even after the exhilarating effort she came away with a little lingering impression of Dr. Anther's indifference to her news. She submitted her impression to her husband, whom she found struggling with a sermon of an hour's length rebellious to his ideal of twenty-five minutes. He detached himself to examine the impression, and to match it with one he had brought away from the supper at Mrs. Langbrith's, when Dr. Anther had received young Langbrith's proposal of the tablet with so little interest. "Perhaps," he suggested, "it is not that country uncouthness altogether: there may not have been all that friendliness between the doctor and the elder Langbrith which we have inferred from his present relations to the family."

"Why, have you heard anything of that kind?" Mrs. Enderby was of an eagerness in her inquiry which her husband thought it well to repress.

"No, nothing at all. It's pure conjecture with me."

"It would be very interesting." Mrs. Enderby sighed for the evident want of foundation in fact.

"Yes, but, Alice, don't let it take possession of your fancy. It would be very unjust and it might be injurious."

"Oh, I should not dream of mentioning it to any one. To whom could I? But it happens to tally—is that slang?"

"I don't know that it is."

"I oughtn't to use it if it is, in a place like this. It happens to tally with something that has come into my mind. I have always wondered why Dr. Anther doesn't marry Mrs. Langbrith."

"He may not wish it, or she may not."

"It would be such an appropriate thing. They are old friends, and they are not too old. Her son will soon be leaving her—I know he's in love with that poor, pretty, joyous Hope Hawberk; and the doctor must have always been very uncomfortable at Mrs. Burwell's, and now she's going to break up, and where *will* he go?"

"He certainly might do worse than go to Mrs. Langbrith's," the rector allowed; "but still there is no more proof that he wishes to marry Langbrith's widow than that he bears a grudge to his memory."

"No, but don't you see that, if he *did* want to marry Mrs. Langbrith, it would make him willing to have Mr. Langbrith forgotten? Wouldn't that be natural?"

"I'm afraid it would, Alice," the rector said with a regretful recognition of a trait of fallen man.

"And wouldn't it account both for the way Dr. Anther behaved that night, and for the way he behaved just now?"

"It might; but don't you see we are proceeding upon a pure hypothesis?"

"That is true," she consented; and now, having not before removed her hat, she pulled out the long pins that pierced its sides into the mass of her handsome graying hair, and lifted it off, carried it out of the study on her hand, thoughtfully considering it as she went.

"Of course, Alice," he called after her, "we must both be careful to keep our hypothesis to ourselves."

"Oh, yes indeed! I shall be very careful not to speak of it."

## XX.

After indulging his resentment of Hope's ridicule, to the violent extreme of renouncing all intention of the memorial tablet, Langbrith allowed a natural revulsion of feeling to carry him so far back as a renunciation of Hope instead. He wrote her an angry letter, in answer to hers asking him not to mind anything she had said for the reason that she was not worth minding herself. Then he felt so much stronger that he returned to his intention, and got

Falk to go with him into Boston to the studio of the young sculptor who was modelling the bas-relief. It had to be done from few and rather poor photographs, for it had not been one of his father's excesses to sit often for his picture. There were some ferrotypes and still older daguerreotypes from which the sculptor had imagined a head more or less ideal. Falk tacitly considered the ideal an improvement on the portrait in the library at Saxmills, and he had kept Langbrith from sending for the painting by sufficiently offensive censures of its woodenness. Besides, as that was from a photograph too, he held that there would be no advantage in studying the tablet from it.

The young sculptor was a find of Langbrith's in the course of his own æsthetic development. He had seen some idealistic banalities of the artist in an art-dealer's window, and had liked them so much that he had got Falk to come and look at them too, and then join him in looking up the sculptor, who, when looked up, proved to be a beautiful, poverty-stricken young Jew, with black hair bushing out over a fine forehead, and, under the forehead, mobile, attentive eyes. He had a profile more Hellenic than Hebraic, and cheeks and chin already blue from shaving a dense beard. It appeared that he had made the banalities to sell, and that he could do stronger if not truer things, as the casts in his studio witnessed. He entered into the motive of the medallion, as Langbrith presented it, with an ardor that matched Langbrith's, and he roughed it out in the clay so quickly that in twenty-four hours he had something to show his patron. He had conceived so aptly of his patron, if not of his subject, that he had flattered the effigy of the elder Langbrith into a likeness of the son, who stood before it in content little short of ecstasy.

"Falk," he said, "it has the ancestral look—the look of race. I can see myself in it. That must have been the way my father looked. Wonderful!"

"It is like you," Falk said, with a glance at the sculptor, who was watching Langbrith with subtle and shifty eyes. "I always supposed you rather resembled your mother."

"Not at all," Langbrith retorted. "There may be something in our features, but her expression is totally different. I see nothing of my mother in this."

"Well, if you're satisfied, that's the end of the story."

"But look, Falk, look at these old pictures!" At the first question, the sculptor had supplied them, and Langbrith now held them in his hand, studying them and then the sketch. "You can see that the outline is the same, and Mr. Lily has read the character into the face which these caricatures belie. It's the artistic resurrection from the mechanical death of these tin-types. It's miraculous!"

"Well, Mr. Lily probably believes in miracles."

The sculptor presented an impervious surface to the smile of

Falk's irony, and Langbrith continued to effervesce without heeding his friend.

"And you've taken my notion most delightfully about the inscription, Mr. Lily. It's just the effect I wanted, fronting the eyes there in those lines of compact capitals, and balanced by that low relief of the mills at the back of the head. Of course, I know that there's nothing definite in those details yet; but the face is so perfect, so struck, as if with a die, that I dread to have you touch it. Do you think you can keep just that look in working it up?"

The young sculptor pouted his handsome, thick, red lips, and said, "I think so," stealing a glance from his subject to his patron.

"Well," Langbrith sighed, "I shall have to trust you," and Falk laughed out. "What's the matter?" Langbrith demanded.

"Of course, you'll have to trust him! You're not running this work of art."

"Oh, I didn't understand you. Of course! And how soon can you have it done, Mr. Lily?"

"How long can you give me?" the sculptor asked.

"I did think of Decoration Day for the dedication, but I've changed my mind about that. I think now I will have it on my father's birthday—the 29th of June. Could you have it ready by that time?"

The sculptor seemed considering seriously, and at last he said, reluctantly, as certain people do to enhance the value of a concession, "I think I can, if there's no delay in the foundry. If there is, you know you can dedicate a gilded plaster copy and put up the bronze later—any time."

"Ah, I don't believe I should like that. It wouldn't be in character with my father. He always paid cash. I shall trust you to have it ready in time. I know you can have it done."

Langbrith remained studying the sketch until Falk's restiveness obliged him to break from it. The more he saw himself in his portrait of his father, the better he was pleased, and the truer he decided the likeness to be. The family look certainly was there, and what greater truth could he ask? With all the self-satisfaction of the academic side of his nature, he rejoiced in what he decided to be an ideal presentation of his father's face.

The sculptor followed him and Falk to the door of his studio, and bowed them out.

"Little Sheeny!" Falk observed when the door had closed upon them.

"He says he is an Italian, but he's all the finer artist for his drop of the 'indelible blood,'" Langbrith said, still rejoicing.

"Every drop of blood in his body is indelible. He ought to be a puller-in. He could sell *you* any misfit in the store. I'll do a puller-in at a Roman statuary's for *Caricature*, and I'll have this fellow working off a Mercury on you, come up from your Sabine papyrus-mill."

"If you didn't like it, Falk—"

"Why not say so? What good would that have done, with your infatuation? Besides, I didn't say I didn't like it. There's a lot of infernal *chie* about it. In its way it's damnably good, but it's you, you poor innocent, right over again, and that's what he was aiming at from the first moment he got those eyes of his afloat on you."

"If that's the way you feel—" Langbrith began, half turning.

Falk caught him by the coat lapel and pulled him round again. "What are you going to do? Countermand it? You couldn't get a better job, and the poor devil needs the job. Don't I tell you it's good? It's all the better for having so much of you in it, if I do say it that hate to. Come! you've blundered and he's swindled into the very thing. Let him go on!"

Langbrith moved reluctantly forward. "If I could trust you, Falk—"

"You've got to."

"I never can make you understand how I feel about my father. He's a religion with me, and anything that seems to belittle him or belie him is a profanation. If I didn't feel that somehow the fellow *had* got my father into the thing, I wouldn't let him go on. Of course, I can see that he has had to work back from me—get the life into it from me! But, apart from the question of the likeness, don't you think it's good?"

"Haven't I said so? The fellow has done it mighty well."

"He has taken all my suggestions," Langbrith said, reaching out for a little more kindness.

"Yes, and St.-Gaudensized them. That's all right. That was the thing to do. At this time of day, he couldn't get away from St.-Gaudens."

"I'm anxious to have him go on," Langbrith dreamily continued, "because he can get it done in time, and I don't know who else could." He hesitated, as he must, even in the intimacy of his confidence with Falk, before adding, "I've just told Hope that I'm having him do it. I've told her that I had taken it up again."

"Why, had you dropped it?"

"Yes," Langbrith owned uneasily. "We had a little misunderstanding about having the dedication on Decoration Day. Falk, I want to tell you; but you're so sharp—"

"Oh, go on, I'll spare you on condition that you're honest."

"Well, you know she didn't approve of that idea, and she put it in such a light about its not being fair to take the day from the old soldiers whom it belonged to, that I saw it just as she did, and I telegraphed her—"

"Telegraphed!" Falk opened his mouth for a laugh, but shut it again without laughing.

"Oh, laugh! I don't care now! And she came back at me with a letter that cut me to the quick. She's terribly sarcastic, or can be. She made all sorts of fun of me for thinking my agreement with her opinion so important that it could not wait for a letter.

Of course, she put it in the way of mocking at herself, saying that she never supposed before that she was of so much consequence that her opinions had to be accepted by telegraph. It ground me awfully, and I took it like a perfect ass."

"Naturally!" Falk interjected.

"Oh, don't mind *me!*" Langbrith exulted. "I wish I could always be an ass to such purpose. I wrote back to her that she needn't be anxious hereafter, for I had given up the whole scheme of the tablet, and I should never trouble her again by my method of asking or acknowledging her opinions."

"That sounds so wise that it must be true," said Falk. "Go on. I thought I knew you, my young friend, but you are unfathomable."

"I begin to believe it. And that brought a letter from her, protesting against my giving up—very dignified and impersonal, and all that; but I was still so sore that I let her letter go unanswered a couple of days, and then there came another from her, entreating me to go on with my plan, and saying if I didn't she never could forgive herself; that she had not meant anything by what she said of my telegraphing; that it was only fun, and I oughtn't to take it in earnest; but if I must, she withdrew it all. She said she knew that if it got about that I was going to give up the plan, it would make all sorts of talk and be very disagreeable."

"She had probably told about your telegraphing to some of the other girls," Falk interpreted. "Susie Johns, likely. Or even Jessamy Colebridge."

"That was what I thought at first, and it made me madder still."

"Yes, you are that kind of ass," Falk assented.

"So I decided not to answer that second letter. And then came one that was fairly imploring. It was dated a day later, and she said in it that she was so miserable she had to write again, and she should not till she heard I was going on with my plan."

"You must have felt proud."

"No, I didn't. I felt ashamed."

"I'm surprised."

"Oh, I deserve anything you can say. She kept up the effect of joking, but she must have been serious, or she wouldn't have written three times."

"And having brought the suppliant to her knees, what did the Prince of Saxmills graciously deign to answer?"

"The P. of S. had already answered the second letter, on second thoughts. He had written to tell her not to think of the matter again; for, on looking it all over, he found that he couldn't relinquish the plan now. He tried to make his decision seem unrelated to her, because he didn't think it fair to take the advantage she had given him."

"I'm glad to hear it," Falk said. "It's a little fact that enables me to continue your acquaintance, which I was just going to drop. Langbrith, don't you know that that girl is one of the most—"

"I think I don't need any one to tell me what she is," Langbrith interrupted, haughtily. Then he instantly stooped from his height. "But I appreciate your feeling, Falk, and I thank you. I was glad that I had answered her second letter, and that my answer and her third had crossed, because I got a letter from my mother with the third from Hope, saying Hope had been to see her, and had told her the trouble she was in. I shouldn't have liked her to think I had done for my mother, even, what I wouldn't do for her."

"Yes, you saved your distance. I congratulate you."

"That's mighty kind of you," said Langbrith, fondly. "And you think—you think, don't you, that the whole situation looks rather favorable for me?"

"Oh, come now! I can't go into that, Langbrith. It's more than I bargained for."

Langbrith went on dreamily: "She must have been a good deal troubled. She asked my mother how it would do to get Dr. Anther to write to me, and my mother had to put her off, by promising to ask him herself. Afterwards she decided not to ask, but to write to me instead. I rather wish she *had* asked the doctor," he concluded, meditatively.

"Why?"

"Oh, there is something that has rankled in me ever since the night of our supper-dance: the way Anther took my proposal of the tablet. Didn't you notice anything peculiar in his manner?"

"He didn't seem to take a great deal of interest," Falk owned.

"He is the oldest living friend of my father. I didn't like it. I had it out with my mother, the next morning, and perhaps that made her reluctant to ask him to take any part in it. She is very proud where there is any question of slight to me, and I suppose she felt as I did about my father. Perhaps she found she couldn't do what she promised Hope. But that's a small matter. The great thing is that I hadn't waited for her letter before writing to Hope. I can't be too glad of that. I should have hated even to seem to have done for another what I hadn't done for her. I'm hard hit, and you know it, Falk, and now you've got to listen. That girl is the rarest human creature on this earth."

"Why not say in the universe, and be done with it?"

"Because I don't want to wrong her by any sort of extravagance. She's so perfect, she has such poise, such spiritual proportion—through her sense of humor, I suppose—that any sort of excess seems an insult to her. She's wonderful, I see that more and more. Sometimes, when I think of her hard life with that opium-eating father of hers, and that belated old Puritan of a grandmother, and how her days must pass between the horrors of his narcotic and her religious frenzies, I wonder she can keep her sanity. But she is the sanest and sweetest and wholesomest and loveliest soul alive. She doesn't seem any more related to her surroundings or origin than the singing that you hear come out of a church window

in summer, and that you can't connect with the stifling and perspiring congregation inside. It's disembodied worship, and she's just joyous girlhood incarnate."

"Oh, Lord! I can't stand much more of this!" Falk groaned.

"When I think of her," Langbrith went on, careless of his sufferings, "I seem to myself the most contemptible and unworthy caricature of humanity—full of every kind of ridiculous imperfection and detestable defect; a wrong-headed, stubborn mule, with an instinct for kicking at the wrong time and in the wrong place, with a hide so thick and a fibre so coarse that any suggestion for its own good, short of a big stick, is lost on it."

"Well, now," Falk got in his revenge, "you can understand just how you seem to other people a good deal of the time when you're *not* thinking of her."

### XXI.

"What's this I hear?" Hope's grandmother required of the gayety which, even beyond the girl's cheerful wont, marked her rebound from her trouble after Langbrith's second letter came. "Folks are sayin' that James is not goin' to put that inscription of his father on the library, and then again that he is. You know anything about it, Hope?"

"Yes, I know all about it, grandma. They're right both ways. He wasn't and he is, unless he's changed his mind again."

"How do you know?"

"He's written to tell me."

The old woman's eyes flared on the smile in the girl's. "What's James Langbrith writin' to you so much for?"

"He seems to like to."

"You engaged to him?"

"Not at present, grandma."

"Better see't you ain't. I don't like the breed any too well. I hain't ever been satisfied at the way he got your father out of the business, and your mother wa'n't at the time. But she's in her grave now, and your father can't ever be got to say a sensible word about it; just praises him up, if you try to talk with him, when everybody knows that Royal Langbrith never drew an unselfish breath. He never went to church and he never darkened anybody's doors in the place, and why he gave that library to the town nobody will ever know. It wa'n't like him to give anything; and I guess if your father could be got to tell the truth once, folks would sing a different song. I don't like your close-mouthed kind, that force one out of partnership and never say why nor wherefore."

A yell from the chamber in the half-story over the room where the two women sat at breakfast, offered itself in apt explanation. Groans and sighs followed, and gasps of prayer and thanksgiving, and then muffled fumbings and stumbings on the floor, as of a man getting out of bed and dressing.

"My! how it does always go through me," the old woman



quavered. "I don't see how you can take it so, Hope. I can't seem to get used to it!"

"I was born used to it," the girl answered, with a patience that was cheerful, even smiling. "He hasn't had such a dream for a good while. He must have been at the laudanum bottle, instead of the other. I'll just look." She ran quickly up the crooking stairs, and her voice made itself heard in fond reproach. "Now, father, how *could* you? What's the use of my trying to trust you? And don't you see what it does? Just throws away all the good effects, and brings us back where we were before."

"Yes," she reported triumphantly to her grandmother, as she reappeared with a large empty bottle in her hand. "It's just as I supposed, and I've got to go and tell Dr. Anther as soon as I've taken father some coffee. Will you put it on the stove, Grandma, while I help him dress? I must hurry."

When she found Anther at his office, after his somewhat later breakfast, and told him of her father's case, he once more made the reflection which his experience had often suggested. He had so rarely found the sorrow or shame of one generation carrying over from one generation to another, that he had been shaken in some of the most significant implications of heredity. He had been led to revise his acceptances of the whole doctrine, so far as to hold them in a kind of suspense for further evidence. He now saw the child of one of the most miserable of men so wholly uncontaminate from his wretchedness, so blithe of face, and apparently so light of heart, that he could not refuse to smile when she reported the fact in its humorous aspect, with an unbroken trust in the fortunate result.

"I guess we've got to begin again, Dr. Anther," she said, uncovering the empty bottle. "You see what father's been doing!"

"How came you to notice?" he asked.

"Oh, a dream that almost raised the roof," she laughed. "I should have thought it was the skeleton man and the green dwarf both, but I didn't ask. When I found this, it wasn't necessary." She offered him the bottle, which he received with a face losing its sympathetic cheerfulness. Her eager nerves took alarm at his gravity. "You don't think he's worse?"

"Oh, no," the doctor came back to his professional reassurance; "it's a little disappointment when we had got him so far along, that's all. But it's not a thing to discourage us. We shall have to begin over again, as you say." He set the bottle aside. "I'll bring it to him, and have a talk with him."

"Oh, do!" the girl said, back in her gayety again. "Your talks do him more good than the medicine, I believe. I wanted to have a talk with you myself the other day."

"You haven't taken to laudanum, I hope," the doctor said, returning to his smile.

"Well, it was something that gave me bad dreams while it lasted.

I thought I had made mischief, and made it out of pure silliness." The doctor's smile took on the incredulity that prompted her to go on. "Yes, I did, I made mischief—set the gossip going. You know you have heard it, Dr. Anther; about James Langbrith giving up putting the tablet to his father, and then deciding to do it?" The doctor reluctantly assented. "Well, I did that." She possessed him, laughing and blushing, of the whole case, and then waited confidently for her acquittal, or, rather, went confidently on without it as something that might be taken for granted. "Before James decided to do it, finally, I was so worked up that I went to Mrs. Langbrith, and coaxed her to ask you to write to him and tell him to go on. She promised, but concluded to write to him herself. By that time, he had made up his mind to go on anyway. You see what a narrow escape you had. I thought I ought to tell you."

The doctor said, "Yes, that's right," and then a vagueness came into his gaze that made the girl laugh.

"Well, I'm going now," she said.

"Oh, I didn't mean that."

"Well, I'm going before you *do*."

"Hope, you're a good girl," Anther said. "I mustn't praise you to your face; but if any one ever wonders to you that you can keep up as you do, you tell them I say they don't know anything about it; that there isn't one in ten thousand that could bear as you do what you have to bear; but don't ever get to supposing that it's your duty to be sad about it. It's your duty to be gay."

"Well, that's what I like being, you know, Dr. Anther. It's so easy that it doesn't seem like very much of a *duty*."

She had risen, and she stood prettily smiling at him; and he looked at her, and then suddenly turned his back on her, as if shunning a temptation. He longed to take her in his arms. "Well, I'll be up in the course of the forenoon."

Before he went to see Hawberk, he dropped his buggy anchor before the Langbrith mills, and found his way through the works, where the odor of wash-day from the pulp-vats was only denser than it was outdoors, to the office partitioned off in a corner of the building. He pushed open the door, which closed with a weighted cord, and shut himself inside with John Langbrith.

The manager was sitting at his desk, and at the opening and closing of the door, which, through the shuddering and muttering of the machinery, made itself seen rather than heard, he got lankly up and took the doctor's offered hand, which he pushed horizontally back and forth without looking at him. "Good morning, doctor," he said, and then he glanced at the papers on his desk with a desperate sigh.

"John Langbrith," Anther began at once, "you know about this scheme of James's for putting up a tablet to his father?"

"I've heard about it. I heard he had dropped it."

"He's going on with it."

"Well, what have I got to do with it? I've got enough on my hands looking after my job here in the mills."

"Has he consulted you about it?"

"No."

"Well, I advise you to write to him and urge him to stop it."

John Langbrith lifted his narrow yellow eyes and met the doctor's. "Why?"

"You know what your brother really was."

"So do you. Why don't *you* tell James to stop it?"

"That's nonsense. Sometime the truth must come out."

"You mean that you will give it away?"

"That's stuff! But there are others."

"Hawberk? What's *his* word worth?"

"Nothing, now. But if he pulls up—"

"He'll never pull up."

"I have hopes of curing him, and I tell you that, when the truth comes out, there will be shame and sorrow for that boy, and scandal for the community. It isn't for me to tell him about his father, and you know his mother can't. It's for you, or for Hawberk."

"He's making up to Hawberk's girl, ain't he? Then they can fix it with Hawberk. My job is to look after the mills. I'm not going outside of it."

"It would be an outrage to let that girl marry the son of the man who ruined her father, and you will be a partaker in the wrong unless you speak. Tell James about it, and let him act from his instincts of honor and justice."

"I can't go outside of my job."

"If he's allowed to go on and marry that poor girl, it will be taking a cruel advantage of her. She will be marrying him blindfold. She will be trapped and fettered and manacled for life."

"I can't go outside of my job."

"When the truth is known, and it must be known, the effect with the public will be hardening and depraving beyond that of any bad life openly lived. It will breed a spirit of defiant cynicism, and put a premium on hypocrisy. It will be inconceivably debauching and corrupting. Think it over, Langbrith!"

"I sha'n't go outside of my job."

The words came with an unexcited dryness which convinced Anther of their finality, and kept him from saying more. But Langbrith followed him to the door with words more forbidding still.

"I don't owe that young man anything; let him make a fool of himself any shape he wants to. And I don't owe this community anything; it may rot for all me. And I don't owe *you* anything; you mind your own business! I don't want you bothering round here any more."

Anther made him no answer. He did not blame him greatly. He knew John Langbrith to be as clean a man as his brother had been foul; but he knew that it was not in the measure of his narrow

nature to do what he had required of him. His job was the measure of him, and Anther owned to himself that John Langbrith could be safe only in keeping to that.

He was lifting his hitching-weight into the buggy, when he felt a hand on his shoulder, and recognized in its touch the heavy mental method of Judge Garley, "Been asking brother John for help?" the judge conjectured.

With the weight dangling by its strap, Anther said, "Yes, I have."

"Well, you didn't get it, I presume. Brother John likes the safe side, which happens in this case to be the inside. I have been considering the matter you laid before me the other day, and my advice is to drop it."

"I sha'n't drop it!" Anther answered, sharply.

The judge did not mind his wilfulness. "At this late day, nothing can be done—nothing but mischief can be done—by drawing the frailties of our departed brother from their dread abode."

"That's what you said."

"Well, that merely proves that I saw it in the right light at first, before taking time to reflect upon it. It increases my respect for myself without diminishing my regard for you, my dear friend. You can accomplish nothing whatever by the course you propose to pursue. An exposure would come from you with a peculiarly bad grace; it is hardly necessary for me to say why; and it would only convince the young man that you were his father's enemy. You could not count upon his mother's corroboration in such an event."

"I could count upon her truth, in any event."

The judge slowly shook his large head. "Not if she is the good woman I take her to be." Anther nervelessly dropped the hitching-weight, and it fell so near the judge's foot that he looked down at it, though he did not move. "My dear friend, you would stand unaided and alone, and the outraged sentiment of the community would be against you. The sentimentality of the community would overwhelm you. Your exposure of the boy's father would be attributed to the worst motive, in the absence of any, and the tide of pity for him would bear you down."

"Look here, Judge Garley!" Anther said. "Would you deliver the dedication address, if you were asked, knowing what you do?"

"There will be time to consider that point when I have been asked. I may say in general terms that I would refuse to do nothing that I was required by my sense of public duty to do."

"It's a pity you went out of politics," Anther said, dryly. He got a new grip of his anchor-strap, and lifted the weight into his buggy. Then he lifted himself in.

But the judge laid a detaining hand on the frame of the lowered top, and questioned with an anxious smile: "Anther, I hope you are not about to do anything precipitate?"

Anther braced himself for an angry reply, and then fell back

against the seat. "Oh, precipitate! I don't know that I'm going to do anything at all."

"Well, that's right," the judge said, and let him drive away.

## XXII.

The twenty-ninth of June was fixed for the dedication of the tablet, and the time that passed before that date seemed by no means too long for the work of preparation. The young sculptor, under the inspiration of Langbrith's frequent visits, worked with such ardor that he finished the bas-relief early enough to send the model to Chicopee, and have it cast in the bronze which alone satisfied Langbrith's sense of the sincerity essential in the tribute he was paying to his father's memory; and Falk owned that the sculptor had done his work well. He had done it with a touch that suggested the most modern sculpture, and yet preserved a sort of allegiance to the stern Puritan nature of the subject. Royal Langbrith was there not only in the life, but in what his son felt to be that high personal character proper to him. Here was a man, not of the immediate moment, but of that hour of the later eighteen sixties which created the immediate moment: the hour of the Republic's supreme consciousness, when all the American forces, redeemed from their employment in the waste of war, were given to enterprises which have since enriched us, and, under the direction of such captains of industry as Langbrith's father, have pressed forward to the commercial conquest of the world. The face, which the sculptor had imagined from the son's face more than from the likenesses supplied him, wore not the old-fashioned Websterian frown of the ante-bellum Americans, when there was no greatness but political greatness in the popular ideal, but had almost an eager smile, full of business promptness, and yet with refined intelligence, a sagacity instantly self-helpful, but ultimately not unkindly. The son's heart glowed within him as he looked at it, and he offered it the ancestor-worship of a man proud of his race, of a dreamer idealizing the future from the past. He wished Hope could see it with him, and the wish reddened him with a conscious blush.

He wrote home to his mother, declaring his entire satisfaction with the work, and predicting her own; and he betrayed his impatience for the event which should appeal with that sculptured face to the gratitude of the community at Saxmills. During his childhood and boyhood, when he had looked out upon the place always as through the windows of his father's house, with a sense of being in it but not of it, he had nourished the arrogant, yet affectionate, longing to dominate it by winning its kindness for himself and his name. His impassioned reveries abounded in dramas of his acceptance by the matter-of-fact little Yankee town, in a sort of seigneurial supremacy, which should be its voluntary acknowledgment of what the Langbriths had done for it; and during the

absences of his college years he had not wholly lost this ambition. His temperament had kept him from great knowledge of the world, and such knowledge as he had grown into had given his boyish fancies practical shape rather than destroyed them. He might be a disagreeable fool, as he often approved himself to his acquaintance, but he was not finally an ignoble fool.

At the bottom of Langbrith's heart still rankled the obscure resentment for Dr. Anther's obscure indifference to his scheme, that he had instantly felt when he first spoke of the scheme before the village magnates in his mother's house. The bruise of that obstruction against which he had so unexpectedly struck remained, and nothing could assuage the hurt but Anther's conviction of wrong and his confession of it. He wondered at times if his mother had ever spoken of the matter to Anther. He had peremptorily forbidden her to do so, in the first letter he wrote home afterwards, but he had hoped she would. Yet no word came from her concerning it, and he could only suppose that she had too faithfully obeyed him. At times, he questioned his own impressions of the fact, and doubted whether it happened, with the significance which his veneration for his father and his affection for Dr. Anther both gave it; and again he could not rid himself of the belief that it had happened in the form and meaning which it first seemed to have.

Before it happened, he had imagined asking Anther, as foremost of the Saxmills men who had known his father, to deliver the dedicatory address; but, with this bruise, this doubt, in his mind, it was impossible to do that; and he felt himself less able to demand the explanation from Anther which he sometimes trembled upon the point of asking, than to turn to some one else for the address. He would have preferred Anther to all others, even if Anther had not been his father's old friend; for the doctor had his repute as a speaker of simple effectiveness; his oration at the celebration of the first Decoration Day after the great war was remembered still in Saxmills, with the exaggerated admiration which history compels when it becomes tradition. It seemed to Langbrith that no one could do such justice to the quiet, almost disdainful, virtues of his father, as the quiet, almost disdainful, powers of his father's friend. But now he had to devolve for the office of orator upon Judge Garley, a speaker of most respectable gifts, but pompous and ponderous, and of a personal ignorance of the man to be commemorated which, in Langbrith's estimation, all but disqualified him. The sweet in the bitter was the hope that Anther might feel the slight of being passed over, and be duly humiliated; but this did not so much console Langbrith as it might if he had not been hurt in his love as well as his pride.

The judge met the doctor driving through the town the day after he had Langbrith's letter requesting him to make the address, and he overcame a certain embarrassment he had in telling his old friend of it.

"I congratulate you," the doctor said with ironical dryness; but he did not ask the judge if he had consented.

"I do not know," the judge said, "whether you will approve of my accepting the invitation."

"Oh, approve!" the doctor said, with deprecation which was also ironical.

But the judge showed no resentment. "I didn't think it was fair to bother you with the matter, or else I should have come to speak with you before writing. But I did not see how I could decline, and I believe you will be satisfied with the manner in which I shall treat the subject."

Anther, if he was too much vexed to try penetrating the reserve which the judge's words invited him to explore, felt also that he had no right to take any tone of censure with him. He said, "You couldn't refuse without wounding the boy's feelings."

"That was what I felt," the judge answered, with relief. "I might have pleaded an excuse of some kind, such as intended absence from the place, but I did not like to do so, in view of the fact that I shall be detained here by some business that is coming up at the time. He asked for an early answer, so that he might get ready some biographical material he wishes to supply me with."

There was a twinkle in the judge's legal eye, and a smile at the corner of his legal mouth, and he responded with a laugh to the doctor's remark: "In addition to what I have given you?"

"Yes, I need all that I can get on account of that!" The judge roared at his own fun, and Anther drove slowly away at the jog-trot which was his horse's habitual gait when they were both absorbed in thought. Their heads hung down with the same droop, and the horse looked as if he might be revolving the same distasteful thought as the doctor, with the same sense of helplessness.

Within the week that followed, Anther was stopped at different times in his progresses through the main street of Saxmills by different leading citizens, who invited him to consult with them upon points of the common interest. James Langbrith seemed not to have rested, after getting Judge Garley's reply, before addressing himself to the Selectmen, the High School Principal, and the Sunday-School Superintendent, as well as the chief officers of the Sons of Pythias and the Saxmills Cadets, inviting their cooperation in the ceremony which he had so much at heart. Each of these dignitaries now addressed himself to Dr. Anther, in his succession, with the confident belief that Dr. Anther, as the oldest friend of Royal Langbrith in the community, and as the close friend of his son and widow, would be most concerned in the affair, and would perhaps have some inside authority and information to impart. He had necessarily to disappoint their hopes, but he found himself putting on more and more the air of at least civic sympathy, which they seemed to demand of him. He could not, indeed, show them his real mind without awakening a suspicion he was far from wishing to rouse,

without starting gossip that would grow into scandal, and involve the Langbriths and himself in mischievous conjecture. He carried his compliance with their obvious expectation to a point where it became almost intolerably irksome, without seeing the point at which he could refuse compliance. When it came to Mrs. Enderby's calling gayly to him from the sidewalk, and halting him, like the rest, to announce that the rector had just had a letter from young Mr. Langbrith asking him to take part in the dedicatory ceremonies, Anther's soul rose in insurrection. "But you knew he had written, I suppose," the lady said.

"No, I certainly didn't," he answered with a sharpness which suggested to her the possibility that the doctor resented the young man's not consulting so old and so near a friend, but suggested it not so forcibly as to withhold her from saying:

"Yes, he has asked Dr. Enderby, and Father Cody, and Mr. Alway of the 'orthodox' church"—she said "orthodox" with the effect of humoring local usage, but also of putting the word between quotation marks—"all to take part. I believe Father Cody is to ask the blessing, and Mr. Alway is to make the opening prayer. Mr. Langbrith has asked my husband to say something from the altruistic standpoint, as it bears upon what his father did for labor in his time by profit-sharing, and, incidentally, if he pleases, to draw any lessons as to character-building from the example of his personality."

Mrs. Enderby ceased obviously reporting Langbrith's diction and continued: "Of course, he is rather vague about what he really does want, but Dr. Enderby found his wish, so far as he imagined it, rather suggestive, and he said at once that he would like to talk with you about it. When could he see you, at your entire leisure?" she could not help pushing officiously on, though she had no authority from her husband to ask the question. Anther did not know what to say, between his ire and his embarrassment. In his hesitation, she added: "I know how difficult it will be for you to fix a time, but I knew how interested you would be!"

"Thank you. I'm afraid I should be very little use," Anther began, but she broke in upon him, to make reparation for James Langbrith's strange thoughtlessness, and to soothe the doctor's wounded pride:

"I'm sure Mr. Langbrith will write you about it. I'm surprised—He probably knows how pressed you are, and wanted to save you all the trouble with details that he could. I rather like his going forward, and doing it all himself, don't you? It shows such spirit, and such a pride in keeping it in his own hands!"

"Yes, yes," Anther said.

"But, of course, you don't have to wait for a direct application from him."

"No."

"Why!" she started in self-surprise. "Why shouldn't you stop in



any evening, and have tea with us, and talk the matter over with Dr. Enderby, then? I should so like to hear you two discussing the civic and social significance of such a man as Royal Langbrith, and getting at the psychology of him. You *will* come, won't you? Won't that be the easiest for you? Will you come, say, to-morrow night?"

"Not to-morrow night. I can't fix the time just now. But I will see. Will you excuse my hurrying off to a patient—"

"Why, of course! How thoughtless of me! But any night will do, doctor, so that it's soon. Good-by, good-by!"

She turned from the gate where she had stopped the doctor, and went indoors to her husband.

"I think it's strangely thoughtless of James Langbrith not to have written to Dr. Anther about the measures he's been taking. The doctor feels it, I know, but he's so large-minded that he'll not let it interfere. He's coming here some evening to talk Royal Langbrith's personality over with you."

"Where have you seen him?"

"At the gate, just now. But I didn't call you, because I didn't want to interrupt you. I've told him all about it, and he's coming the first evening he can. I told him any evening would do. I knew you'd want me to. And all I shall ask is to sit by and hear you two analyze Royal Langbrith. With the scientific standpoint which Doctor Anther can supply, and the philosophic and religious view which you can give, I think it will be one of the most intensely interesting things that ever was. Don't you?"

"I hope you'll find it so, my dear. But, really, young Langbrith's oversight seems an extraordinary—"

"Yes, don't it! I hardly know how to account for it, but if the doctor can overlook it, *we* can, and he's evidently disposed to overlook it. At any rate, I shall 'keep right round after him,' as the country people say, till he redeems his promise."

She so far redeemed her own promise as to halt Anther, whenever she could reach him, by hailing him with her voice, and when she could not, by waving him to a stand with her fluttered handkerchief. But it was not till she had almost lost faith in his large-mindedness, and had many times sided with him and against him in his imaginable resentment of young Langbrith's neglect; it was not till the eve of the day fixed for the dedication ceremonies, that Anther appeared at the rectory. He came too late for tea; and, when he did come, he did not invite Mrs. Enderby's presence at the psychological analysis of Royal Langbrith's personality, which he did not enter upon till she no longer had the least excuse for not leaving him to her husband.

*(To be Continued.)*